



Never Give in to Fear

Marti MacGibbon

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Ever conscious that the past makes us who we are, Marti MacGibbon, a recovering alcoholic and addict, not only leaves open the door to her past—she goes in, turns the lights on, makes herself a cup of coffee, and gets comfortable on the couch. Her memoir of recovery is an unflinching examination of her choices and what they cost her—as well as how she was pulled out of her personal hell into a saner way of life.

MacGibbon, as a certified addiction treatment professional, clearly understands the value of honesty. The bald truth can make us laugh, or it can be a punch in the gut. MacGibbon's voice in *Never Give in to Fear* is wholly her own. Her narration is funny—she can laugh at her old self, even as she shows the reader the terror and loss she felt in the past. When she goes to buy drugs from a madwoman dealer near Guerneville, MacGibbon says, “My skin crawled at the thought of visiting this madhouse, but I knew the lunatic woman kept a stash of pain pills around her place. She was the ideal person to seek out as a de facto pharmacist. Besides, Firebird's leg couldn't wait while I shopped around the River for opiates in the wee hours of a stormy night.” Though the situation is dire, MacGibbon is self-aware, and is able to show the humor of the moment without losing the tense pacing of her story. The memoir whips along, hardly taking a breath.

Never Give in to Fear earns its place among other recent sobriety memoirs. Comparable to Mary Karr's *Lit*, and *Drinking: A Love Story* by Caroline Knapp, *Never Give in to Fear* is an excellent story, both inspiring and entertaining. MacGibbon has a natural gift for storytelling—no surprise, considering her background as a standup comic and motivational speaker. What makes *Never Give in to Fear* shine is MacGibbon's ease with her story. She doesn't apologize for who she is, and she doesn't try to win over the reader. It's just the facts, ma'am, and by the time the first chapter is over she's already on a roll. Honest to a fault, in ruthless pursuit of the story, MacGibbon's memoir is captivating from the very first sentence.

MacGibbon has written—and lived—her way through a forbidding place. It's wonderful to not only read her story, but to know that she has flourished in her years of recovery. A memoir that offers hope, even in the worst of times, *Never Give in to Fear* is a terrific read. It's the perfect book for a reader in recovery, though MacGibbon's real-life adventures will be equally appealing to anyone who needs a little more adrenaline in their reading list.

CLAIRE FOSTER (October 22, 2010)

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